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NT 510 The Gospel of Matthew

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00 NT510 (2003) Syllabus

Tentative
Matthew - NT 510 (IBS) XL
Summer 2003

Note: Please maximize your window to view the syllabus in the intended formatting (the middle box in the upper right hand corner of this screen).

Instructor: Kenneth Schenck

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Office Phone (765) 677-2258

Office Hours: Mondays 9-11:30 ET; Other Times by Arrangement

Some Preliminary Remarks:

I-B-S. These three letters often strike fear into the heart of the budding Asburian. Your task, should you choose to accept it, is to quell these rumors with a great experience online this semester!

This is now my second time teaching this course, and I am excited about it. On the one hand, I'm excited because we're talking about the Bible here, the Gospel of Matthew in particular. I'm selfishly excited to delve into a book that I don't normally teach when I'm not adjuncting for Asbury (I'm much more of an "epistle's man" when I'm not donning the cape of an Asbury professor).

I'm also excited because of my hopes for you! I think Asbury has lent me some tools to pass on to you that may just revolutionize your use of Scripture in ministry. Finally, if I'm lucky, I'm hoping some of your paradigms will shift just ever so slightly. I have some visions for the Bible in the church of the twenty-first century, and I'm hoping you'll catch some of them.

However, before we dig in, I have some initial observations to make:

1. Inductive Bible Study (IBS) will be hard work!

The normal expectation for this class is 10-12 hours per week. Please treat this as sacred time. Make a contract (implied or written) with your family so this time will be protected.

2. IBS will mean a new vocabulary!

The "lingo" of IBS is probably the biggest obstacle for the initiate. But once you grasp the basics, you've got it made.

3. IBS may be frustrating!

Inductive Bible Study is a method of approaching the scriptures that allows the text itself to generate its meaning (well, technically a reader always generates a text's meaning, but more about this later). Part of what makes this approach difficult is that Christians tend to come to the Bible with many of their conclusions already in hand. And it's almost easier to learn something you know nothing about than to modify a way of thinking you've developed over a number of years.

IBS is very "methody" (not surprising for a seminary with Methodist associations). Its regimen helps keep us on track and to prevent us from reading things into the Bible that weren't there originally. To be sure, none of us will ever overcome our own glasses, but IBS will screen out our more obvious errors. Unfortunately, you may feel at times that the method has taken over--I'll try to keep the big picture before you at all times.

4. A request for grace/feedback

I ask that we all develop an atmosphere of grace as we communicate and work in this online medium. On the one hand, it is easy to forget online that we are communicating with real flesh and blood individuals. We should extend all the same courtesies online that we would in a real time classroom. One form that your grace might take to me is to make comments on the assignments, readings, and discussions. Are they working? Are you learning from them? Are you having problems? Have I estimated the time it should take you to prepare for each model fairly and accurately? What should I change about this course when I offer it again? Let me know.

5. And a final formality

The development of this extended learning syllabus and the modules that follow is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by my permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the internet. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from the professor (Kenneth Schenck).

Personal Greetings:

Let me welcome each and every one of you into this IBS community. It is my prayer that your time in the course will be personally rewarding and enriching for your ministry.

First of all, my name is Ken Schenck. I'm a professor of New Testament at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana. I'm 36 years old, married to Angela and have four children (11, 10, 3, and 2).

I did my undergraduate work at Southern Wesleyan University (1987), my M.Div. at our own Asbury Theological Seminary (1990), an MA in Classics at the University of Kentucky (1993), and I received my PhD in New Testament at the University of Durham, England (1996). The Epistle to the Hebrews was my focus. I am also an ordained minister in the Wesleyan Church.

Now it's your turn:

If you have not set up your Resume on the FirstClass email system, please do so now. There is a place for a picture on the Resume, but that is optional. Also, would you please expand on your Resume (limit it to 100 words) and place it in the NT510 (IBS) Discussion Center by the end of the first week of class. If you prefer, make it a casual profile. You are more than your work and educational experience.

Feedback is important. I look forward to interacting with you not only on the biblical material but also on the IBS method online! I will need your feedback in order to "see your facial expressions."

Asbury Community

Communities form and maintain our spiritual well being. Our vertical relationship with God is intimately intertwined with our horizontal relationships with those around us. ExL classes are just that: community experiences, students interacting with Seminary staff, faculty, and other students. I pray that this class will never appear to you as an independent study course but as a learning community. So, let's see how this community life will take shape.

(1) ExL Support Community

From the outset, this community has a tremendous support staff and they have given me this clear offer, "If any of your students have a need, please contact us!" Here are their names and their "doing" role in ExL:

For general help with anything contact:

Kevin D. Osborn
Director of Extended Learning
Asbury Theological Seminary
(859) 858-2191
exl_director@asburyseminary.edu

For technical support contact:

ExL Technical Supervisor
Asbury Theological Seminary
(859) 858-2373
ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu

For Library services contact:

Hannah Kirsch
ExL Reference Librarian
859-858-2189
Hannah.Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu

By the way, all ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library; however, if such services are unavailable or inadequate, ExL students may also obtain library books and journal articles through the mail from Asbury Theological Seminary's B. L. Fisher Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be emailed to the ExL Reference Librarian, Hannah Kirsch (Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu). Hannah is also available to assist ExL students with reference requests such as how to find citations for books and articles, how to use the various online databases available to ExL students, or how to begin looking for information on a specific topic.

To request material from the B.L. Fisher Library, begin by searching the library's WebPac (online catalog of the library's holdings) or one of the journal databases available on the ExL Virtual Library webpage (found in the Resource Center of your ExL classroom). Then send an email to Hannah citing the sources that you would like to request. If you need help searching the databases, do not hesitate to ask. Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page) and the cost of shipping. Express mail services (price varies according to weight) and faxing (\$1.50 for the first page and 25 cents for each additional page plus photocopy charges) are also available, but material will generally take 1-2 days from the receipt of the request to be processed.

Plan ahead and make your requests early.

To order textbooks or for textbook information contact:
Asbury's Bookstore
1-866-855-8252 (toll-free)
exlbooks@asburyseminary.edu

Please don't hesitate to contact these people in an emergency. Moreover, I may refer you to them if a question is most applicable to their expertise.

(2) Teaching Community of Asbury:

Though I am the professor for NT510, I am a product of the academic communities within which I was trained. For example, I sat at the feet of several of the professors in the IBS department here at ATS, particularly Dr. David Bauer and Dr. David Thompson. Dr. David Smith also gave me a "jump start" last year into teaching Matthew IBS online--help of immense value. I hope to draw on their wisdom and pass some of it on to you.

Yet I am not a tape recording. As at one point the faith of my godly parents became the faith of Ken Schenck, so also my approach to IBS will bear the mark of my own interpretive pilgrimage.

In part I mention this fact to let you know that you are getting instruction from an entire community, not just an individual professor. But I also mention it in hopes that you also will make IBS your own. It is not an inflexible theory carved in stone for the sole purpose of coldly extracting brute facts from the Bible. Rather, IBS incorporates our God-given uniqueness to "flesh out" an encounter with God's Holy Word. While it is to your advantage to imitate me at first, eventually I hope you will develop your own style, making IBS your method, not merely a copy of mine.

(3) The Community of this Course

Now, let's see how our IBS community will materialize for this term.

Virtual Office Hours

I will check the classroom at least every other day. This is when I will officially check in on the course, read posts, and answer email. Post your general questions and responses to the NT510(IFS) Discussion Center. Remember, this is our classroom, so questions you ask should be overheard (or in our case over-read) by others in the class. On the other hand, communication that you want to send me privately should be sent to the NT510(IFS) Office. Only I can access those messages. Please note that in case of emergency you should include "Urgent NT510" in the subject line of the email so I will know to get to it immediately.

Virtual Classroom

Class discussion will take place in the NT510(IFS) Discussion Center. All participants in the class will be able to read and respond to items posted in the Discussion Center. In an on-campus course everyone hears your remarks and has a chance to benefit and respond. That's the way it should be in this electronic community.

By the way, it's all right to disagree or critique a person's work, gently but forthrightly. I also welcome disagreement with my own conclusions. While I hope I'm a little farther down the road than you with regard to the meaning of Matthew, I usually feel more like the scribe of Matt. 7:29 than Jesus, who taught "with authority." We will try to learn from each other. This will happen best if we probe one another's thinking.

It is important to respond with more than cliches like: "Great thought!" "I like that!" or "I have questions about that." Instead, let's state clearly what we like and why, indicating what we think is "great" and on what basis. "Fluffy" postings that don't move beyond these easy responses will not count toward class participation.

Communications for this class, especially in the Discussion Center, should be marked by quality not quantity. In general, try to keep your postings and responses to no more than 50-75 words or 2-3 well thought-out paragraphs. By the way, the online format works best with a number of short paragraphs rather than long drawn out ones. Help us out by hitting the enter or return button often--it will make your thoughts more readable (and communication is the key to persuasion!). From time to time, usually at the end of a module, I will move old discussions into the Archive Center so that the Discussion Center doesn't get too cluttered. Remember, you can always refer back any old discussion in the Archive center.

The Course Center is where the modules for the course will be posted. Inside the module folders you will find detailed instructions for each module, the assignments, examples, and so forth. I will make sure both the current module and the one following are posted at any one time (as well as past modules). Therefore, at the start of class, Module 1: Introduction to IBS Method and Module 2: Let's Survey will be posted. I will post Module 3 on the day we begin Module 2 and so on.

Team Center. Jesus sent his disciples out two-by-two for their on-the-job training. Our teams, usually limited to three or four members, will be set up for you to exchange materials with one another and to interact with one another's work. In our team folders, only team members will be able to read and respond to your work. Reviewing the work of another student will give you a whole new perspective on IBS. Part of your learning experience will involve critiquing and encouraging others. More on this will follow after we get to know one another.

Finally, Questions?. If you find yourself having lots of questions about this method, you are not alone. Such is the common experience of IBS students throughout the ages. As such, our class has a special place for methodological questions, "forest-size" questions rather than the "tree-sized" questions you might post in the Discussion Center. Please post all your mega-questions in the folder titled Questions?.

Prayer and Praise Room

Although we are separated geographically, we can still pray for one another. The folder called Prayer and Praise Room is the place to place prayers and praises. Nothing builds a sense of community like knowing each other's needs and calling upon the God of the Universe to answer them. May our geographic distance be overcome by the omnipresence of Immanuel ("God with us"; Matthew 1:23).

The Resource Center contains links to the Library, Chapel, Registration, ExL Updates, and so forth. It also contains a PowerPoint Viewer.

Lastly, there is a Chat Center. You can use this to chat live in real-time with your classmates or with me, or both, depending on who is on-line at the same time. These discussions are not saved so you do not have to worry about any permanent record. Think of the Chat Center as the hallway outside our classroom.

I will set up a non-required chat the first week of class to try to help us all get better acquainted with one another.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to methodical, inductive Bible study, with an emphasis upon understanding biblical books as wholes. In this class we will utilize Matthew's Gospel to help you acquire and develop the skills for making inductive Bible Study (IBS) a integral part of your ministry.

Course Objectives

These five objectives are for every IBS class taught within the Biblical Studies department:

Demonstrate basic skills in observing the text, including aspects that pertain to the original language, with a view toward using these observations in the interpretation of the text.

Demonstrate basic skills in interpreting the text by citing, describing, and drawing inferences from various types of evidence, including those that pertain to the original language.

Demonstrate ability to discuss some of the major hermeneutical issues surrounding observation and interpretation.

Demonstrate a preliminary and basic awareness of issues pertaining to the evaluation of passages for their contemporary possibilities for application and to the process of actually applying passages to specific contemporary situations.

Demonstrate knowledge of the content of the book in its literary, theological, and historical contexts.

Moreover, I want you to feel comfortable with IBS vocabulary and methodology. It will become more and more natural with use. Additionally, I want you to be able to see how the 4 phases of IBS (Observation, Interpretation, Evaluation, and Appropriation), though often performed separately and sequentially, constitute a holistic inductive approach. I want you to see how each phase works, but I also want you to keep in mind how they form a whole.

Textbooks

Required Textbooks

(1) The Bible

The primary text is the Bible. As a part of your work, feel free to draw on what we might call "formal equivalence" translations. Such versions stick closely to the original wording and sentence structure of the Greek and Hebrew text.

Examples include the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), and the New American Bible (NAB). While the King James Version and New King James Version are formal equivalence translations, they sometimes reflect a less original Greek text. For this reason you should not use them as your primary biblical text.

Similarly, you should not use a paraphrase (e.g. Living Bible), a translation by a single individual (e.g. The Message), or a "dynamic equivalence" translation for your primary biblical text (e.g. New International Version, New Living Translation, etc.). These versions try to bridge the gap between "our time" and "that time" by reformulating the wording of the original Greek and by drawing on rough parallels in contemporary language. While these kinds of version are excellent in a pastoral context, the price you pay is the illusion that you are actually looking at what the Bible originally said. You lose the opportunity to hear the possibilities of the text itself.

It would be best if your copy of the Bible was not overly interpretive (i.e., with extended notes, paragraph headings, etc.). Christians often use such "user-friendly" helps as a crutch. I ask that you wait on consulting these notes until AFTER your own inductive work. You may very well find that you need to correct the notes in your Bible!

(2) David L. Thompson, Bible Study That Works (Hereafter: BSTW) Revised edition. (Naperville, IN: Evangel Press, 1994).

(3) David R. Bauer, An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry (Hereafter: BRM), (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003).

This is a useful way to familiarize yourself with numerous secondary sources.

Collateral/Recommended Textbooks

The following items are not required for purchase but you will need to consult many of them throughout the course. You may want to consider purchasing some of them. However, be prepared. A reference library is a very expensive investment. Alternative possibilities for the time-being may include:

- 1) Seeing if a library near you (especially a seminary, Christian college/University, or major university library) has these volumes.
- 2) Contacting a local minister friend who might have some of these references and be willing to part with them for a semester-or at least let you have access to them.

Resources for a Lifetime of Study

1. A Bible dictionary and/or Bible encyclopedia (See BSTW, 59 and BRM, 26-28). Let me recommend a few:

Joel B. Green et al., eds, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992). This is an excellent dictionary with 200+ articles, written from an evangelical perspective. Edited by our own Joel Green. Worth having on your shelf. Abbreviated DJG.

Paul J. Achtemeier et al., eds, HarperCollins Bible Dictionary, rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996). This is the best one-volume dictionary currently on the market. Note that you want the 1996 revised edition. The earlier version is still useful, however. Abbreviated HBD.

David Noel Freedman et al., eds., The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992). This is also available on CD-ROM (much better for searching). This is the best Bible dictionary on the market in coverage, bibliography, length, comprehensiveness, etc. It is quite costly, however. Abbreviated ABD.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al., eds., The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, rev. ed., 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988). Note that

this is the second, revised edition. (The first edition, which is often available at a cheap, knock-off price, is not worth it.) This is the best set available if you want a distinctively evangelical approach. At four volumes it is also quite extensive. Again, cost is an issue. Abbreviated ISBE.

Also useful is the older and now dated Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. George A. Buttrick, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), especially its fifth, supplementary volume (1976). Abbreviated IDB and IDBSupp.

2. Bible Atlas.

This is not required but will be helpful for all of your future bible study. Maps are a wonderful way to familiarize yourself with the location of towns and regions mentioned in the gospels. You may also wish to consult articles on localities in your Bible dictionary/encyclopedia.

3. Matthew Commentaries.

Two respected, contemporary commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew (See BRM, 237-39). Full length, critical commentaries are preferred. Try to stay away from homiletical ("sermonizing") commentaries.

Note about commentary use in this class. In any assignment, do not refer to the secondary source prior to your own inductive interpretative work. The reason will become self-evident as the class progresses. In this class, we want to move carefully from evidence to conclusions and we want to learn the observational skills to be able to do this on our own. Thus, commentaries consulted AFTER our work will provide insight and another perspective. Commentaries consulted BEFORE our own study often restrict what we see to the commentator's observations. Personally, I would like to rely upon the text of Matthew and the Holy Spirit to guide my initial study!

Furthermore, we will only draw conclusions when we have evidence in hand (or on the page)! You will find that in many commentaries, the author (usually due to space restrictions imposed by the publisher) does not cite his/her evidence with the documentation required for this course.

4. An exhaustive concordance or (preferably) an "Englishman's" concordance that allows you to track original language words (See BSTW, 55 and BRM, 24-25). If you have taken NT500, you already have purchased the software program BibleWorks. This will give you more detail than a simple concordance.

Grading

"We learn by doing," John Dewey said. You will do a lot of observation and interpretation in this course. You might even consider this course a practicum in interpretation!

For the most part, the first time we do any specific type of assignment we will do it in teams (e.g. your first survey, your first detailed observation, etc...). I hope to give you full points on these assignments, although I cannot to do so in good conscience if you do not contribute to your group's product.

Similarly, your first solo attempt at a type of assignment will usually be for a completion grade. In other words, you will get full points if you turn in a completed assignment on time.

The implication is that the assignments in the later part of the semester matter the most in terms of your final grade. Of these I will drop the lowest grade.

In other words, if pressure begins to build at home, work, or you simply need a break; you can drop one (1) of the major assignments. Of course YOU CANNOT DROP THE FINAL PROJECT.

For obvious reasons, late work presents a significant problem in this format. I cannot give full credit to work submitted after you have had access to the postings of other students, let alone after I have posted my own work. I reserve the right to exact a major grade penalty on late work, even to the extent of giving no credit for an assignment. In some circumstances it might be possible to create an alternate assignment to substitute.

In addition to the regular IBS assignments, you will read David Thompson's Bible Study That Works and write a three (3) page critical book review (details in module 1; 50/1000).

Please take seriously your interaction with Teammates as well as class discussion. Class discussion accounts for 130/1000 of your final grade (or 13%). Some of the best learning comes through student interaction.

I will attempt to provide careful and explicit instructions for readings and assignments. If anything is unclear, please post a message in the NT510 (IBS) Discussion Center, so all can hear my response. Additionally, dates will be given for completion. All work will be expected at twelve midnight (i.e. 12 am, EST) on the due date (i.e. at the very beginning of the due date).

GRADES WILL BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

Evaluation of Thompson	50 points
Class Participation	130 points
Exegetical Assignments	620 points
Final Project	200 points

Grading Scale:

1000-950	A	769-730	C
949-900	A-	729-700	C-
899-870	B+	699-670	D+
869-830	B	669-600	D
829-800	B-	599 below	F
799-770	C+		

Incompletes:

Since so many of us are over-worked and under constant time crunches, let me alert you to the school's policy on incompletes. The catalog reads: "A grade of 'I' denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted a 'F'."

Office Hours:

You will note above that I am making myself available at 765-677-2258 on Mondays from 9:00-11:30 ET. If you wish to have a more traditional conversation, you can reach me at that time via telephone. I can become available at other times by arrangement.

Modules and Schedule (Schedule is subject to change.)		Module Begins
Module 1	Introduction to IBS Method	June 2
Module 2	Surveying Books and Smaller Units	June 10
Module 3	DETAILED OBSERVATION	July 1
Module 4	INTERPRETATION	July 15
Module 5	EVALUATION	Aug 5
Module 6	APPLICATION	Aug 12
Module 7	Final Project	Aug 19
Module 8	Matthew in Retrospect	Aug 26
Semester ends Aug 29.		

Note: The modules are of varying length.